



Silent Hunters: German U-boat Commanders of World War II

Theodore P. Savas

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When World War II erupted across Europe in 1939, Germany knew it could not hope to compete with the Royal Navy in a head-to-head naval war. Left with no viable alternatives, the Third Reich bet everything on the submarine in a desperate attempt to sink more tonnage than the Allies could construct. Some of these "silent hunters" who slipped out of their shelters along Europe's shores to stalk their prey have enjoyed considerable recognition in the years since. While most aspects of the bitter struggle have been told and retold from both the Axis and Allied points of view, the careers of some highly effective U-boat commanders have languished in undeserved obscurity.

"Silent Hunters" profiles six such commanders in this collection of magnificent essays by leading experts in the field. These men include: Knight's Cross ace Englebert Endrass, whose spectacular career before being lost off the coast of Gibraltar is described by his best friend and fellow ace Erich Topp, who wrote his piece while on his 15th war patrol once he learned his friend was dead; Karl-Friedrich Merten, who was ranked among the war's top tonnage aces; Ralph Kapitsky, an almost completely unknown commander who used his U-615 in a suicidal surface-to-air battle in the Caribbean to allow many of his fellow submariners to escape eastward into the Atlantic; Fritz Guggenberger, who sank an aircraft carrier, was captured, and then organized the largest POW escape attempt in American history; Victor Oehr, Adm. Karl Donitz's former staff officer who not only earned the Knight's Cross, but was then wounded and captured in north Africa; and finally, U-852's Heinz Eck, who was tried, convicted, and executed by the British for ordering his crew to shoot the survivors of the Greek merchant ship *Peleus*. This is a one-of-a-kind book that all U-boat buffs and general history lovers will want to own and read.

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